

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

# ANNUAL REPORT

ON THE HEALTH OF THE

Skelmersdale Urban District

DURING THE YEAR

1945

By

HERBERT E. MARSDEN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.,

*Of Gray's Inn, Barrister-at-Law,  
Justice of the Peace for the County of Lancaster.*

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

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SKELMERDALE  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL,  
1945.

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# ANNUAL REPORT.

## INTRODUCTION

By S. C. GAWNE, M.D., B.S.Lond., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.C.H.,  
D.P.H., Barrister-at-Law  
(Acting Medical Officer of Health from 1st April, 1946).

*To the Chairman and Members  
of the Skelmersdale Urban District Council.*

GENTLEMEN,

It falls to me to perform the sad duty of presenting to you the Report of your late Medical Officer of Health, Dr. H. E. Marsden, on the health of Skelmersdale for 1945.

Of Dr. Marsden's work and services for the public health of Skelmersdale I need hardly speak, for they are already well known throughout the district which he served so faithfully for eighteen years. Possessed of many exceptional qualities, personal and professional, he will be remembered for his keen interest in the promotion of the health and welfare of the people under his charge.

The Report for 1945 was almost completed at the time of Dr. Marsden's tragic death in April of this year and his comments on the vital statistics and other matters relating to the health of the district are clear and need no amplification.

It will be noted that the birth rate showed a rise from 17.4 per 1,000 population in 1944 to 18.1 in 1945. This rise in the birth rate was not characteristic of the country as a whole, the general trend for 1945 being downward. Thus the birth rate for England and Wales in 1945 was 16.1, as against 17.6 for 1944.

The infantile mortality rate of 127 per 1,000 live births showed a very considerable increase on that for 1944. With a relatively small population rates of this nature are liable to fluctuation and this fact requires to be borne in mind in any appraisal of the health of the district from a study of the vital statistics. Deaths from congenital malformation and prematurity account largely for the increase in the infantile death rate.

The general health of the district during the year was good. The operation of the Council's scheme for immunisation doubtless largely contributed to the low incidence of diphtheria, one case only of this disease being notified during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,  
Your obedient Servant,  
S. C. GAWNE.

August, 1946.



## Section A.

### STATISTICS OF THE AREA.

Medical Officer of Health—HERBERT E. MARSDEN, J.P., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Barrister-at-Law (Medical Officer of Health for the West Lancashire Rural District).

Sanitary Inspector—

G. A. GILL, Cert., S.I.B., M.S.I.A. (from January to March).  
NOEL BENSON, A.R.San.I., M.S.I.A., A.M.I.S.E. (from September, 1945).

Area of District—1,942 acres.

Resident Population (Registrar General's estimate at mid-1945)—5,611.

Number of inhabited houses, according to Rate Books at end of 1945—1,708.

Rateable value—£19,812. Sum represented by a penny rate—£76 16s. 3d.

#### SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1945.

	Total.	M.	F.
Live Births—Legitimate ... ..	93	44	49
Illegitimate ... ..	9	7	2
(Birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated population—18.1.)			
Stillbirths ... ..	4	3	1
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births—37.)			
Deaths ... ..	71	38	33
		Deaths.	
Deaths from Puerperal Causes:—			
Puerperal and Post-abortive Sepsis ... ..			Nil
Other maternal causes ... ..			Nil
Total ... ..			Nil
Deaths of Infants under one year of age:—			
All infants per 1,000 live births ... ..			127
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ...			118
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births ...			222
Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ... ..			9
„ „ Measles (all ages) ... ..			Nil
„ „ Whooping Cough (all ages) ... ..			Nil
„ „ Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age) ... ..			2

#### BIRTHS.

The number of births recorded in the Urban District during the year was 102, equal to a rate of 18.1 per 1,000 of the population.

This represents an increase of 0.9 on the rate for 1944, and an increase of 5.8 over the rate for 1938.

### DEATHS.

The total deaths registered in the Urban District during the year numbered 71. Of this number 38 were males and 33 were females. The figure is 6 less than that for 1944 and 12 less than the average for the five years 1940-1944. The death rate for the year was 12.6 per 1,000, and was 0.9 less than 1944's rate.

There were two deaths during the year due to Zymotic and Epidemic diseases.

### INFANTILE MORTALITY.

There were 13 deaths of infants under one year, which gives an infantile mortality rate of 127 per 1,000 births.

### CAUSES OF DEATH IN THE SKELMERSDALE URBAN DISTRICT, 1945.

Causes.	Males.	Females.
Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers ... ..	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Fever ... ..	—	—
Scarlet Fever ... ..	—	—
Whooping Cough ... ..	—	—
Diphtheria ... ..	—	1
Tuberculosis of Respiratory System ... ..	—	3
Other forms of tuberculosis ... ..	—	—
Syphilitic diseases ... ..	—	—
Influenza ... ..	1	—
Measles ... ..	—	—
Acute Polio-myelitis and Polio-encephalitis ...	—	—
Acute Inf. encephalitis ... ..	—	1
Cancer ... ..	5	4
Diabetes ... ..	—	1
Intra cranial vascular lesions ... ..	4	2
Heart Disease ... ..	13	6
Other circulatory diseases ... ..	—	1
Bronchitis ... ..	—	1
Pneumonia ... ..	2	—
Other respiratory diseases ... ..	—	—
Ulcer of stomach or duodenum ... ..	1	—
Diarrhœa (under 2 years) ... ..	1	1

Causes.						Males.	Females.
Appendicitis	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
Other digestive diseases	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
Puerperal and Post-abortion sepsis	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
Other maternal causes	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
Premature birth	...	...	...	...	...	3	—
Congenital malformation, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
Suicide	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
Road traffic accidents	...	...	...	...	...	—	2
Other violent causes	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
All other causes	...	...	...	...	...	4	6
Deaths of Infants under 1 year—							
Total	...	...	...	...	...	9	4
Legitimate	...	...	...	...	...	7	4
Illegitimate	...	...	...	...	...	2	—

## Section B.

# GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

## LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Pathological and bacteriological specimens are sent to the appropriate departments of the University of Liverpool, Wigan Infirmary, Southport Infirmary, and to Messrs. Evans, Lescher and Webb, Runcorn, for examination.

Chemical analysis of water, when required, is done at Messrs. Evans's laboratories at Runcorn.

Of twelve swabs (2 patients) examined during the year for the presence of *Bacillus Diphtheriæ*, all proved to be negative.

## AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

No ambulance is maintained in the township by the Local Authority or otherwise. Nevertheless, the ambulance facilities are completely adequate.

The Ormskirk General Hospital and the Wigan Royal Infirmary take cases from Skelmersdale, and both provide ambulances. The Lancashire Public Assistance Committee also have an ambulance attached to their Hospital at Ormskirk.



The West Lancashire Rural District Council remove infectious cases in their ambulance by contract with the Skelmersdale Council.

## NURSING IN THE HOME.

The Skelmersdale District Nursing Association is affiliated to the County Nursing Association. Its district includes Burscough Bridge, Lathom, Westhead, Hoscarr and Newburgh, all of which townships are in the Urban District of Ormskirk.

The following table gives particulars of the work done in Skelmersdale by the Nursing Association during the year 1st January, 1945, to 31st December, 1945.

CASES NURSED					VISITS			TOTAL	
Midwifery	Maternity	Surgical	Medical	T.B.	Nursing	Ante-Natal	T.B.	Cases	Visits
—	—	44	57	1	2965	—	12	102	2977

## CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

The Congregational Schoolroom in Witham Road is utilised every Wednesday morning as a Child Welfare Centre and Minor Ailments Clinic, under the direction of the appropriate Department of the County Medical Officer of Health.

An Immunisation Clinic is held every Tuesday afternoon at 2 o'clock on the same premises by the District Medical Officer of Health.

## HOSPITALS: PUBLIC AND VOLUNTARY.

There are no hospitals in the town.

The Ormskirk Public Assistance Hospital, and the voluntary hospitals at Ormskirk and Wigan, provide ample accommodation for medical and surgical cases, and there is a maternity ward at the Public Assistance Hospital.

Infectious cases are admitted to the West Lancashire Rural Council's hospital at Aughton, by agreement with that Authority, whilst smallpox cases go to Liverpool, also by agreement.



## Section C.

### SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

#### WATER SUPPLY.

The supply of water in the district continues to be on the whole satisfactory in quality and quantity, excepting the East Boundary, where the pressure is low owing to the higher elevation. 1,705 houses are connected to the main.

The whole of the district is supplied with water by the Southport and District Water Board, from an artesian well, situated at Scarth Hill, in the parish of Lathom.

It was not found necessary during the year to examine the supply, as this is undertaken systematically by the Water Board, who send copies of analyses to the Medical Officer of Health. All these analyses were satisfactory.

#### SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The district is sewered on the partly separate system. The sewage from approximately 1,137 houses in the principal housing area is discharged by gravity through a 24-inch outfall sewer at the Council's Berry Street Disposal Works, and that from 255 houses in this area by a 15-inch outfall sewer at their Penny Lane Works.

The sewage at both works is treated by settlement and land irrigation, and periodical cleansing and repairs are carried out.

A complete sewerage and sewage disposal scheme was prepared by Mr. H. B. Ward, M.I.C.E., of Liverpool; and then a joint scheme was considered dealing with part of the Upholland Urban District. The scheme for Skelmersdale provided new sewers in School Lane, High Street, Church Road, etc. Certain lengths of existing sewers which were found to be in satisfactory condition are to be retained in the new scheme. No further progress has been made in carrying out this scheme.

#### CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Privy middens—108. No. of closets attached to these middens—125.

No. of pail closets—29.

No. of dry ashpits (excluding middens)—5.

No. of movable ashbins—1,553.

No. of houses on water carriage system—1,554.

No. of fresh water closets—1,554.

## REFUSE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL.

The removal of house and shop refuse is carried out by the Council with a team of five men under the direction of the Sanitary Inspector. A Karrier "Bantam" Refuse Collector is employed with a capacity of seven cubic yards. Dustbins are emptied weekly and privy-middens at least once a month. Disposal is by means of crude tipping at the former reservoir, Bromilow Road.

### SUMMARY OF WORK DONE IN THE SANITARY INSPECTOR'S DEPARTMENT DURING THE YEAR 1945.

Complaints received and investigated	...	...	...	...	120
Number of Dwelling-houses inspected under Public Health Acts					412
"                    "          revisited	"	"	"	"	1350
"          Houses inspected under Housing Acts	...	...			26
"                    "          revisited	"	"	"	...	92
"          Visits to Factories and Workshops	...	...	...		24
"                    "          "          Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	19
"                    "          "          Cowsheds and Dairies	...	...	...	...	14
"                    "          "          Schools	...	...	...	...	9
"                    "          "          Licensed Premises	...	...	...	...	18
"                    "          Re Refuse Collection, etc.	...	...	...	...	14
"                    "          "          Food Inspection	...	...	...	...	14
"                    "          "          Infectious Disease	...	...	...	...	6
"          Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	...	...	...	...	52
"          Preliminary Notices Served	...	...	...	...	179
"          Statutory	"	"	...	...	23

### Section D.

### HOUSING.

#### HOUSING STATISTICS FOR 1945.

NUMBER OF NEW HOUSES ERECTED DURING THE YEAR:—

(a) Total (including numbers given separately under (b) ...	—
(i) By the Local Authority ...	—
(ii) By other Local Authorities ...	—
(iii) By other bodies and persons ...	—
(b) With State assistance under the Housing Acts:—	
(i) By the Local Authority ...	—
(ii) By other bodies or persons ...	—



1.	INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR :—	
(1) (a)	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ... ..	412
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	1762
(1) (a)	Number of dwelling houses which were inspected and recorded under Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932 ... ..	26
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	118
(3)	Number of dwelling houses found to be unfit for human habitation ... ..	—
(4)	Number of dwelling houses found not to be reasonably fit for human habitation ... ..	—
2.	REMEDY OF DEFECTS DURING THE YEAR WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICE :—	
	Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers ... ..	—
3.	ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR ...	—
4.	PROCEEDING UNDER SECTIONS 11 AND 13 OF THE HOUSING ACT, 1936 :—	
(1)	Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ... ..	—
(2)	Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ... ..	—

## Section E.

### INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

The following articles of food were on inspection found unfit for human consumption and voluntarily surrendered. Whenever possible the condemned food was used for animal feeding purposes, the remainder being destroyed.

Tinned Goods	...	...	...	...	130	lbs.
Valentia Raisins	...	...	...	...	50	lbs.
Dried Peas	...	...	...	...	56	lbs.
Butter	...	...	...	...	1½	lbs.
Ham	...	...	...	...	3½	lbs.
Cheese	...	...	...	...	16¾	lbs.
Potatoes	...	...	...	...	8	cwts.
Wheaten Biscuits	...	...	...	...	13	tons.



## DAIRIES, COWSHEDS AND MILKSHOPS.

At the end of the year there were 7 dairy farms and 1 dairyman or milk purveyor.

During the year it was not found necessary to deal with any animals under the T.B. Order of 1938.

Cowsheds are inspected every three months. Their general condition is much improved.

## MEAT.

There are no licensed slaughterhouses in the area.

## BAKEHOUSES.

There are 6 bakehouses in the town and limewashing is carried out periodically.

## FACTORIES.

Regular inspections are made of the factories in the township and conditions are satisfactory.

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### Section F.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES STATISTICS.

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	Smallpox	Enteric Fever	Scarlet Fever	Measles	Diphtheria	Puerperal Pyrexia	Erysipelas	Cerebro-spinal Fever	Poliomyelitis	Malaria	Whooping Cough	Pneumonia
Cases ... ..	—	—	8	65	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Deaths... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2

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There were no school closures during the year.

# NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR 1945.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES	Total Cases at all Ages	TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED											Total Deaths	Hospital	
		YEARS												Total Cases removed to Hospital	Deaths in Hospital of persons belonging to district
		Un-der 1 year	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65	over 65 &		
Scarlet Fever ... ..	8	—	1	—	1	3	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria ... ..	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
Enteric Fever ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles ... ..	65	1	8	15	8	6	27	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Whooping Cough ... ..	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Pneumonia ... ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro-Spinal Fever ... ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis .	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	2	—	1	4	—
Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis ... ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTALS ... ..	81	1	9	15	11	9	29	1	2	2	1	1	6	6	—

The following table shows the number, monthly distribution, and nature of cases of infections disease coming under the notice of the Medical Officer of Health during 1945:—

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Totals	Removed to Hospital
Anthrax ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Smallpox ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever ...	1	2	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	—	2	—	8	—
Diphtheria ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Enteric Fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Primary and Acute Influenzal	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia ...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Encephalitis Lethargica ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro-Spinal Fever ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Malaria ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles ...	—	—	—	—	1	62	1	1	—	—	—	—	65	1
Whooping Cough ...	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
MONTHLY TOTALS ...	3	2	—	—	1	65	1	1	1	—	2	—	76	2



SUMMARY OF ADMISSIONS TO AND DISCHARGES FROM  
THE AUGHTON INFECTIOUS DISEASES HOSPITAL, 1945.

ADMISSIONS.	Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	1
	Measles	...	...	...	...	1
DISCHARGES.	Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	1
	Measles	...	...	...	...	1
	Journeys with ambulance for patient				...	1
	Journeys with ambulance for bedding				...	4
	Houses attended for disinfection			...	...	6
	Number of times disinfector was used				...	3
	Rooms sprayed	...	...	...	...	8
	Articles stoved	...	...	...	...	50

TABLE SHOWING INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY FROM  
SCARLET FEVER, 1936-1945.

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Cases ...	12	7	10	1	—	4	4	5	10	8
Deaths ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

TABLE SHOWING INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY FROM  
DIPHThERIA, 1936-1945.

	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
Cases ...	1	2	16	2	—	1	4	1	1	1
Deaths ..	1	2	2	—	—	—	1	—	—	1

Particulars of work done in connection with the scheme for Immunisation against Scarlet Fever and Diphtheria since the commencement in May, 1935, to December 31st, 1945.

SCHOOL.		Acceptances	Total on register	Percentage immunised actually in school, 31/12/45	Immunised against diphtheria only	4 injections against Scarlet Fever	3 injections against both diseases	2 injections against both diseases	1 injection against both diseases	Final Schick test	Schick negative	Negative after re-test	Absent or left when results were read	Later refused treatment
Council	1935-44 1945	463 18	484 316		3 —	362 16	306 16	1 1	1 1	394 16	356 12	25 —	9 —	4 —
Endowed	1935-44 1945	161 33	101 108		— —	124 33	141 33	1 —	— —	145 32	131 30	2 —	11 —	5 —
Methodist	1935-44 1945	163 23	151 139		1 2	99 20	124 20	2 1	1 —	165 19	141 17	16 2	3 —	4 —
St. Richards	1935-44 1945	212 12	118 105		6 2	188 10	164 10	— —	— —	191 10	184 9	3 —	5 —	1 —
Under School Age	1935-44 1945	315 66	— —		214 66	9 —	34 —	— —	— —	1 —	— —	— —	— —	— —
Over School Age	1935-44 1945	13 —	— —		10 —	2 —	1 —	— —	— —	3 —	2 —	1 —	— —	— —
Hospital Patients	1935-44 1945	16 —	— —		15 —	— —	9 —	— —	— —	1 —	— —	— —	— —	— —
TOTALS	1935-44 1945	1343 152	854 668	79.34	249 70	861 79	779 79	4 2	2 1	898 77	814 68	47 2	28 —	14 —

# TUBERCULOSIS.

## NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1945.

Age Periods				NEW CASES				DEATHS			
				Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
				M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Years											
0—1	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1—5	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5—10	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10—15	...	...	...	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
15—20	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
20—25	...	...	...	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
25—35	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
35—45	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45—55	...	...	...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55—65	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards	...			—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals	...	...		3	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
				4		1		—		—	

## NOTIFICATIONS ON FORM 1 BY MEDICAL OFFICERS OF HOSPITALS.

	Public Assistance and General and Military Hospitals.				Sanatoria and Pulmonary Hospitals.			
Pulmonary :—								
Males	...	...	...	3				—
Females	...	...		—				1
Non-Pulmonary :—								
Males	...	...	...	—				—
Females	...	...		—				—

Dispensary and sanatorium treatment for Tuberculosis is administered by the appropriate department of the Lancashire County Council.

## INFLUENZA AND OTHER RESPIRATORY DISEASES.

There was one death from Influenza during the year, also two deaths were due to Pneumonia.







